

This Week In Congress

September 7, 2004

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Wheat Sprout Damage Update

On Friday, we had a victory for Kansas wheat farmers. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA) amended its original decision on wheat sprout damage to allow Kansas wheat farmers to receive crop insurance for losses caused by wheat sprout. In June, rains caused significant damage to winter wheat in western Kansas, and because of confusion surrounding sampling procedures used to measure crop loss, many Kansas wheat producers were denied crop insurance payments for their losses.

As Chairman of the General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee, I demanded that the RMA correct its initial decision on wheat sprout damage as it was too harsh and short-sighted, causing additional hardships to wheat producers. The announcement by the RMA is a month overdue, but it is still in time to help Kansans who have been affected by wheat sprout damage. The final extent of the wheat sprout damage has yet to be determined, but it is likely to reach as high as \$15 to \$20 million in Kansas.

For more information, affected producers should contact their local USDA offices.

Representing Kansas at the Republican National Convention

This week, I joined 75 Kansas delegates and alternates along with their friends and families in New York for the Republican National Convention. I joined the Kansas Congressional delegation for a series of events honoring our state and Kansans as a whole.

National conventions are held every four years by each of the major parties, and serve as the official nominating platform for candidates for President and Vice President of the United States. In addition to this official role, the convention also provided the Republican Party with

an opportunity to feature up-and-coming political stars while showcasing their vision for the future. The national convention represents a critical role in our democracy and I was honored to be among the Kansans in attendance.

Visiting the U.S. Military Academy, West Point

While in New York on Thursday, I traveled to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. One of the greatest honors I have as a Congressman is nominating young men and women for spots within one of our four military service academies. My time at West Point gave me an opportunity to tour the academy's campus and visit with cadets from the First District of Kansas enrolled there. I visited with John Barnes of Emporia, Chris Bolz of Olpe, Todd Bryant of Concordia, Theo Kleinsorge of Colby, Daniel Livingston of Pratt, Zach Pfannenstiel of Hays, Noah Pyle of Dodge City, Abby Rayl of Hutchinson, Eric Rucker of Woodbine and Masey Wolfe of Tribune.

The cadets at West Point represent a rich cross-section of the First District and serve our state and nation with integrity and pride. Each year, a selection board interviews applicants and offers recommendations for nominations of high school graduates. Several of these cadets applied to West Point through my office and participated in the service academy selection process. I was pleased to recommend them for this prestigious institution. As the deadline for this year's academy nominations approaches, it is clear that these young men and women have set the bar high. I have no doubt that we will continue our tradition of sending the best and brightest to serve in our armed forces and defend freedom.

Congress Reconvenes

August is the annual Congressional work period. Historically, this time was designed allow lawmakers to leave Washington, D.C. during the height of the summer heat. Today, however, the August break gives me an opportunity to visit with Kansans and get marching orders to take back to Congress. I have spent the past few weeks traveling across the district and have logged more than 5,000 miles, visiting dozens of communities and meeting with hundreds of Kansans who provided me with excellent feedback.

When Congress reconvenes later today, it will hopefully address a number of important issues facing our country. Among the issues that need to be addressed is the need for a new transportation plan as well as a comprehensive energy policy. Also, Congress needs to act quickly to address our health care system, which is facing a looming crisis-especially in rural areas. These are important issues to Kansans, and I hope that we can work through the partisan differences and presidential election-year politics to pass meaningful legislation that will help Kansans and all Americans.

Joining the K-State Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Also on Friday, I was able to join approximately 200 sports fans, contributors and nominees for the K-State Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Banquet. The event had a virtual "who's who" of K-State sports legends from across the state and nation. K-State has a lot to be proud of in its sporting traditions, and it was an honor to be on hand to celebrate

these athletes' achievements.

In the Office

This week John and Susan Moyer and Nila Filby of Junction City stopped by my office for a tour of the Capitol. Also, in the office for a tour were Joyce and Dorothy Gallaway of Dwight.

Very truly yours,

Jerry